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DEC 1 1941

November 1941

EXPERIMENT STATION FILE

THE LAND-GRANT COLLEGES AND DEFENSE 1/

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As we have participated in this 55th annual meeting of the Association of Land-Grant Colleges, I have thought many times that in all the years the Association has been meeting, it has never convened in a more critical period. This was said by Dean Mumford at the beginning of the conference. It has been said over and over again. Many of us have been present at meetings when other national crises were facing us, such as the World War of 1917 and 1918, and the great economic depression of the early thirties. We've seen some internal crises which have caused us great anxiety. But I don't believe I shall be challenged when I say that all other periods of stress pale into insignificance in the light of the emergency our Nation is facing at present.

The stark reality of the situation is brought out in the letter Secretary Wickard addressed to this meeting. I have no intention of amplifying his statements. But I do want to express the conviction that his leadership in these days of action -- leadership based on his experience as a practical farmer, as a leader among farmers, and as a public servant -- is something in which we all can take heart.

I find reason for gratification in the fact that so much of our discussion during the meeting has been based on what the land-grant colleges in their teaching, in their research, and in their extension work can do to further the cause of National Defense. Of course, the thinking and the discussions will not stop when we leave Chicago. I hope, and I have confidence that the thinking will be translated into action when each of you returns to his respective State.

THE WORLD WAR -- AND NOW

It is natural, I suppose, that we should make comparisons of many different kinds between conditions now and those which existed in the first World War. In many respects, we may use our experience of that time as a guide. In other respects, however, there are significant differences. Those of us who have gray hair remember the terrific responsibilities thrust upon the experiment stations and the infant extension services with the outbreak of war, and the demand upon agriculture for more food. In 2 years' time, from 1916 to 1918, the number of Extension Service employees jumped from less than 3,000 to 7,000. And the load of work piled upon each increased at a dizzy speed. But we are agreed that those agents did magnificent work and met the need of the hour.

We have a different situation today. Over 9,000 trained and experienced extension workers are on the job. We have a county agricultural agent in almost every important agricultural county in the United States. There are home demonstration agents and 4-H

1/ An address before the closing session of the Land-Grant College Association, Chicago, Ill., Wednesday, November 12, 1941.

Club agents in hundreds of others, and farm people who are accustomed to working with their extension representatives. There are thousands of other representatives of the Federal Government at work in the farming areas of the country, each one qualified to give his own particular type of service. But in most counties the Extension Service representative still is the agricultural leader, by virtue of his judgment, his training, his experience, and his well-rounded point of view.

As we figuratively gird our loins for an extreme effort, we shall need all the far-seeing leadership we can obtain -- at the Federal, State, county, or community level. We are fortunate to be as well prepared as we are to cope with the emergency conditions.

THE WHY OF FARM DEFENSE

The farm people of the Nation are called upon to produce more food in 1942 than they ever have produced before; furthermore, they are called upon to produce to meet specific needs, with great increases of some commodities, moderate increase of others, and reductions of still others. If this is to be done -- and it must be done -- the people on the land must understand our national need. They must know why we need more milk and more hogs, and why we don't need more wheat or cotton or tobacco. A great job of education needs to be done, and we must not overlook any phase of it.

If it had not been for the land-grant colleges, their training of farmers, of agricultural scientists, economists, engineers, nutritionists, and administrators; and for the extension work which has carried the findings of science to all farmers, it would not be possible to reach the farm production goals that have been established for next year. We would not have the knowledge upon which to base our farming operations, we would not have the modern equipment, we would not have the improved plant varieties and high-producing animals necessary to make such efficient production possible. The land-grant colleges and their cumulative contributions may well prove to be the salvation of democracy.

But we cannot rest on what we have done. We have even greater responsibilities ahead of us. Every branch of American society is called upon to carry part of the load; and those of us concerned with food production, with teaching, with nutrition, with engineering, and with research must do our part. We cannot go along as usual if the big job is to be done. We, too, must adopt priorities. Without question, Priority No. 1 must be accorded to Defense -- no matter in what phase of defense each of us is qualified to help. Second in our list of priorities, I would place post-war planning. After defense and post-war planning have been given the attention they require, then we may give thought to the things we planned to do before we realized a crisis was ahead.

In carrying out our No. 1 task, we have, of course, a kind of work which we know completely how to do. That is the provision of the technical information on how to make each hour of man labor and each pound of feed or seed or fertilizer count for the most in production. But we also have another type of task. That task is to carry to each farm the facts about the need of our Nation for unstinted production of some commodities and controlled production of others, and the facts about the arrangements that have been made by the Federal Government to safeguard farmers if they expand production. Every farmer ought to know of the many safeguards against a repetition of the price and income disaster which followed the first World War. Secretary Wickard in the September meetings with

you and the other public servants of agriculture listed and explained these safeguards. Now it is our duty to convey the facts to farmers. There are disturbing forecasts of price crashes impending in the immediate or the longer future. Naturally these forecasts tend to break the morale of the farmers on whom the Nation is depending for the necessary increases in food production. Such forecasts breed doubt and fear and hesitation in a time when the call is for bold and confident action to step up production in several lines. Take the facts which prove the forecasts false to every farmer in your State. That is our duty both to farmers and to the Nation as a whole. It is a duty which we as educators cannot dodge, nor do we want to dodge it.

Farmers are confronted with shortages of skilled labor, machinery, fertilizer, and spray materials. All this is going to mean some sacrifices for a while; a great deal of extra effort; and probably a considerable amount of anxiety.

SERVICES AND SACRIFICES

The land-grant colleges will be asked for guidance on how to keep up crop yields with less fertilizer and how to control pests with less spray material. It is going to be in the national interest that we provide answers to the problems that will be brought to every college campus and to every county agent and home demonstration agent. We are in a position to give services obtainable nowhere else. We may be called upon for services that we think should come from some other agency. But let's not forget what Secretary Wickard told us at the time he announced the 1942 production goals: "Don't worry about jurisdictional lines; help and be helped. The important thing is to get the job done."

We have talked a lot about the ingenuity and self-reliance of the American people, especially the farm people. We'll need to call all that self-reliance into play to meet our food requirements.

If I were a State director of extension, I think I should call my staff together -- as I know most if not all State directors have done -- and say: "Let's see how our program lines up alongside our needs. We've been carrying on a peacetime program and we're in a wartime situation. Perhaps we need to make some changes." And I wouldn't hesitate to make drastic changes in the extension program if that were necessary to get our production job done. I should urge county extension workers to do the same thing. I should be sure that every hour of every extension worker's time in my State was making some contribution to our National Defense effort. It seems to me that we cannot do less than that in this emergency.

Our first job must be to help win the war. If Hitler is not defeated, we may expect to live the rest of our lives as a nation armed to the teeth, expending a major part of our national energy and resources in a war effort. To avoid such a dreary, treadmill existence, we must see to it that this war ends as soon as possible in victory for the forces of freedom.

POST-WAR PLANNING

Assuming that this will be accomplished, an important part of our defense effort is to plan for the kind of world we want to live in after the war is over. Too many

people are forecasting that the end of the war and a cessation of our defense activity must be accompanied by an economic collapse -- that we cannot continue to find uses for all the food our farms will have been geared to turn out during the wartime period. They fear that the higher we climb in employment and production during the war, the farther we are due to fall when the war ends.

Our President holds to no such fatalistic point of view. Neither does our Secretary of Agriculture. Our national leadership proceeds from the premise that the people of the United States still make their own destiny. Probably you are familiar with the steps President Roosevelt has initiated throughout the Government to provide plans for the transition to an economy of peace which will maintain full employment and the ability of the American people to consume the things that are produced. As the President said last week: "There are so many millions of people in this world who have never been adequately fed and clothed and housed. By undertaking to provide a decent standard of living for these millions, the free peoples of the world can furnish employment to every man and woman who seeks a job."

Secretary Wickard has established a standing committee in the Department of Agriculture to prepare suggested plans for readjustments in agriculture and in rural activities that may be necessary when peace comes. State and county planning committees need to be making their plans, based on these suggestions, and their recommendations for steps that can be taken to adjust agriculture to a peacetime economy. We recognize, of course, that agriculture is woven so tightly into our whole economic and social structure that agriculture will sink or swim with the rest of the Nation when peace comes. But there are many things affecting the whole people in which agriculture will have a direct interest. We must be prepared with plans and recommendations for helping the Nation as a whole; and we must see to it that the interests of agriculture as an industry, and of our 30 million rural people as a part of our society, are given full consideration.

Foremost, of course, is the problem of maintaining full employment when peace comes. If all the potential workers of the Nation are employed, we may have an outlet for all that agriculture produces at prices which assure a fair return to the farmer. How then may we distribute the abundance agriculture is capable of producing? How can we be sure that everyone has enough of the right things to eat so that the third or fourth of our national population whose diets are below the nutritional safety line may be brought up to a higher standard of nutrition?

The whole problem of National, State, and county planning is so tremendous that I won't attempt to go into it further. But I do say it must be recognized as an integral part of our defense activity.

TOMORROW'S CITIZENS

The land-grant colleges have a definite challenge to train young people now for living in the post-war world. Over a period of decades, the colleges of the land-grant system have turned out splendid technicians in agriculture, engineering, home economics, and similar fields. But they have not always enabled the student to realize why it may be important for the world to have well-trained agriculturists, engineers, and home economists.

Not long ago I was on the campus of one of our large universities which includes a land-grant college. The university has an enrollment of 14,000 students. I asked about the number enrolled in the philosophy courses. "About 150," I was told. "Is it a vital department?" I wanted to know. The answer I got was: "Well, I don't know. We don't hear much about it." I am afraid that is only too true. We don't hear much about the philosophy of the things we are trying to teach in our colleges these days. We teach the "how" and forget about the "why" of the things the students learn.

Yesterday, Dr. Edmund E. Day, in his thought-provoking address, Science and Social Progress, pointed out the need for starting on a new tack -- that science is not enough. This new tack in rural life must consider the philosophical problems of man as well as the scientific problems. We must consider ends as well as means.

We look back with regret on how poorly prepared we were for the problems of peace after the first World War. We must not make that mistake again. To avoid it, we need to call on our scholars and thinkers, the philosophers -- both professional and cracker-barrel philosophers -- and men of religion, as well as the men of science. We need their help in answering the question, What should we plan for?

The planning committees that will be working on ways of meeting the problems of post-war adjustment need the counsel of men and women with training in philosophy just as much as they need the counsel of agronomists and civil engineers. They need to plan not only for better farming but also for better living for a third of the Nation's people. They need the philosophical approach, as well as the scientific approach, to the subjects with which they will deal.

We need the help of people with philosophical training and attitudes; we need to give more people the benefit of that kind of training today in order that we may have their help tomorrow.

All of you would probably be very much surprised if I did not at least touch on the subject of nutrition. I shall do so only briefly. In the past few days you have heard some of the outstanding scientific and professional people whose researches and work are bringing about the nutritional renaissance we are witnessing. Governor McNutt, my chief in nutrition activities, who is scheduled to be the next speaker, is recognized as a leader who has shown great statesmanship by realizing the need for national emphasis on nutrition and health and by translating this recognition into action.

The Nutrition Defense Program places us in the midst of a great movement whereby developments in nutrition are reflected in shifts of emphasis in agricultural production on the one hand and in a new application of science to eating habits and the health of our people on the other hand.

We are crystallizing a fund of knowledge which has been accumulated over a long period. In secluded laboratories -- many of them in our land-grant colleges and experiment stations -- men and women have worked diligently for years to find out more about the relationship between man and his food -- between animals and their food. Slowly but surely our knowledge has increased, but that knowledge has not been widespread. Now, suddenly the curtain is pulled back by a national emergency, and the great mass of people find that there is an amazing amount of information available about nutrition. They want that information, and many of them need it badly.

We in this room have much to do with seeing to it that the new knowledge of nutrition is spread far and wide, in understandable form, so that it may be interpreted by the men, women, and children who are the United States; and so that it may ultimately result in a sturdier race of people -- a stronger and healthier America.

There is a line of defense that runs through each home and each kitchen of that home in the United States. Under Governor McNutt's generalship, an aggressive, coordinated attack using all educational and governmental forces is being made in this line.

Ours is the rural sector. Trained and staffed by home agents, supported by county agents and club agents and hundred of thousands of farm women serving as local leaders -- I can see this line moving forward step by step in 1942 toward real and permanent goals.

The farm mother's kitchen and dining table, the farm family's food supply, together with the Extension agencies for taking science into the farm home are key points in the defense program. Encouragement should be given to all who want to cooperate on this important front.

Education in nutrition is fundamental to the goal toward which we are striving. We must accompany it with the necessary measures to see that people not only know what to eat to be well nourished, but that they also are able to get the necessary foods. The Nutrition Program is intimately related to the things we have been discussing -- increased production and adjustment, planning for full employment, distribution of our food abundance to those who are not employed, a post-war world that will be a better world.

Knowledge about these matters must be based on a widespread understanding of our national objectives. Such an understanding can be had through an ever wider and more practical use of advanced learning, and through the daily application of the philosophic concept to our democratic way of life. Only through a national understanding so developed shall we be able to do the things necessary to defeat Hitlerism and to avoid the dangers of collapse after the war, when we transfer our wartime energy and productive capacity to production for peace. Our people must have this kind of broad educational foundation if they are to create the kind of world they want to live in; and if they are to have peace with abundance. Such an understanding can be developed, I am convinced, but it represents a challenge to all of us who call ourselves educators.

No greater challenge than this ever has been placed before the land-grant colleges.

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Distribution: A copy of this circular has been sent to each extension worker, and to each agricultural college library and experiment-station library.



